

the only catechism, and charity the handmaid of human belief and practice. Let the world study truth, believe as they can, say less and practice more, and one universal religion of the heart will be adopted. What my neighbour believes is of no consequence to me; what I believe is alone of consequence to myself. Let every one obey the dictates of his own conscience, and religious controversy must cease." This is a true account of the *pseudo* rights and dictates of conscience and religious liberty; but, independent of its superlative ridiculousness, it is a creed which no CHRISTIAN can contemplate without horror! Its genuine professors are most appropriately delineated by St Paul in the first chapter of Romans. But it may be asked of the same Paul, why did he learn any other catechism than sincerity when he was murdering the Christians, or why did he give himself such amazing trouble on account of what other men believed? Why did he not continue to "obey the dictates of his own conscience," and thus throw his bucket of cold water on the religious controversies which in his time shook kingdoms to their foundation?

But religion cannot be taught except under some specific Creed, and in reference to some ministry, unless indeed it is assumed that Christianity is destitute both of doctrines and ministry other than such as every private individual can furnish by his own ingenuity. But if that be the truth of the case—if the rights of conscience are co-extensive with its dictates, and if *self will* is the God whom we are bound to obey, then the parent is under no obligation whatever to teach his children any religious creed at all. He cannot be bound to teach them what they are not bound to "observe and obey" until their dying hour; because the sole reason for his thus teaching them is founded in their obligation to do so. If this claimed liberty exists at all, it flatly contradicts the right to pre-occupy vacant ground; and a child wedded to the belief of his father is in the condition of one married in infancy, yet having free power to choose a partner when grown to maturity. A parent cannot tell what the dictates of his child's conscience will prescribe to him in regard to religion, and therefore he can no more "train him up in the way he should go" than he can train him up to walk without legs.—It is claimed as the perfection of Gospel liberty, for every man to worship God according to the dictates of *his own*, and not his neighbour's conscience: and yet numbers of those who make the claim, as if infected with a species of insanity, are continually endeavouring to gain converts to some particular system of belief; just as if they could not have a conscience till despoiled of its previous rights and dictates, and brought into subjection to the dictates of other people's consciences.

Parents can have no more authority in these things over their children than a *Christian* state has over its children. The power in each case is given from God, and ought to be used for the same common end: namely, the religious instruction of all the people. Yet every parent who cares any thing for the glory of God, in his capacity of *Political and Ecclesiastical Head* over his own house, rigidly acts upon that very principle against which we witness such unqualified abuse the moment it passes the domestic threshold. What parent thinks of raising up half a dozen "different denominations" round his own fireside to quarrel for their Paul and their Apollos and their Cephas? And what consistent parent who has any religion at all in his house, has not an *established* religion, to the exclusion of all others,—a religion supported by his own authority, money, and example? And yet how many of those little domestic tyrants do we find pouring out upon the Government the most bitter and unchristian revilings for acting upon *their own principles*, only on a more extended scale?—nay, even associations formed for opposing and annihilating that self same authority in the Government which constitutes the basis of every domestic establishment in the whole world? Why then do they demand the surrender of that principle by the State, which should the State demand from them, they could at once unsheath the weapons of rebellion?

A house divided against itself cannot stand; for, where lawful authority is resisted, and the *will* of the inferior placed in opposition thereto, it is in danger of being brought to desolation. Our Lord tells us that a *kingdom* is subject to the same rule. If then the subjects of a *Christian State* refuse obedience to their lawful superiors and spiritual rulers, it cannot be expected that, if they become strong enough, that kingdom will stand. The History of England might furnish some instructive lessons on this point to

those who are now so eager for the downfall of the Church, if indeed they are not aiming at "the same excess of riot" with those who have gone before them, and therefore rather take their conduct for a pattern.

Foster, himself a dissenter, says in his excellent Essay on Popular Ignorance: "The nature of man is, in such a moral state, that any thing is the less acceptable for coming directly from God." "With respect to the intellectual communications which were given to constitute the light of knowledge in their souls, there can, on the same principles, be no doubt that they would more willingly have opened their minds to receive them, and exercised their faculties upon them, if they could have appeared as something originating in human wisdom, or at least as something which had been long surrendered by the divine revealer, to maintain itself in the world on much the same terms as the doctrines worked out from mere human speculation." Resistance to authority is one of the leading characteristics of the human mind—(we wonder that the phrenologists have not discovered a bump on the human skull, and a large one, particularly devoted to it, and considerably differing from the *pugnacious* bump;)—and there is a great deal of zeal in the word which owes its existence exclusively to that unfortunate propensity. Foster in the above strikes the identical chord which is vocal with the falsely claimed rights and dictates of conscience and religious liberty; and we may add, that the Church of Christ is rejected and scoffed at in numerous instances for no assignable reason but because it comes "as one having authority and not as one on a level with human inventions and self constituted societies. We ourselves know an instance of an adult refusing to be baptised by a Clergyman of the Church of England, and giving the following as an excuse: "If I do, the Church people will claim me as their property; and I have no idea of joining a society from which I am not at liberty to separate myself at pleasure, and go to any other, according to the dictates of my own conscience." The question here was not, How shall I obey God? but—how shall I gratify myself?

Foster again observes that, "A mind holding but a little truth will, commonly, hold that little with a feeble apprehension, and a great liability to have it perverted to subserve the errors that occupy that same mind. It is an unhappy "lack of knowledge" when there is not enough to persevere, to what there is of it, the honest beneficial quality of knowledge. How many of the follies, excesses and crimes, in the course of the world, have taken their pretended warrant from some fragment of truth dis severed from the connection with truths indispensable to its right operation, and in that detached state easily perverted into coalescence with the most noxious principles, which concealed and gave effect to their malignity by the advantage of this combination." Thus it is that noisy declaimers, by mixing up a little truth with a great deal of falsehood, prepare themselves for hurling their "railing accusations" against institutions the most sacred, and personages for their sakes identified with them and therefore the most venerable, among mankind—for *despising dominion and speaking evil of dignities* with the levity and presumption allowable on the ground that they were expressly made for the butt of upstart insolence. The complaints of Korah and his company, it is to be feared, are not confined to Korah and his company.

(To be Continued.)

FOR THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE LITURGY.—No. 1.

SUNDAY MORNING.

"This is the day that the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad thereof." This is the day that God hath reserved unto himself to be spent to his glory and especial service. "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days shall thou labour and do all that thou hast to do." Six days out of seven he hath granted us to provide for our worldly wants and take care of our perishing bodies. "He knoweth whereof we are made; he remembereth that we are but dust." He knoweth that we have need of all these things; and therefore he grants us the privilege of providing them. Six days to serve ourselves; but yet so as to serve him. The true